

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY NAIROBI PRIORITY

USCINCEUR PRIORITY

CINCUSNAVEUR PRIORITY

COMIDEASTNOR PRIORITY

CINCLANT

COMSIXTHFLT

USS GUAM

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 298799

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, PFOR, US, KE

SUBJECT: U.S. AIRCRAFT FLY-BY OF NAIROBI - PRESS GUIDANCE

1. FOLLOWING Q AND A GUIDANCE PROVIDED TO DEPARTMENT PRESS
SPOKESMAN FOR DECEMBER 8 BRIEFING IS REPEATED HEREWITH FOR
YOUR INFORMATION. SUBJECT OF NAIROBI FLY-BY WAS NOT RAISED
AT DECEMBER 8 BRIEFING, BUT GUIDANCE WILL BE UTILIZED
SHOULD SUBJECT COME UP IN SUBSEQUENT BRIEFINGS.

Q. THE WIRE SERVICES ARE CARRYING AN ANNOUNCEMENT TODAY
BY THE KENYAN GOVERNMENT THAT AIRCRAFT FROM A U.S. CARRIER
ARE GOING TO DO A FLY-BY OF NAIROBI ON THEIR INDEPENDENCE
DAY (SUNDAY THE 12TH). CAN YOU CONFIRM OR ELABORATE ON
THIS REPORT?

A. I CAN CONFIRM THE REPORT. THE ANNOUNCEMENT WAS MADE
BY THE KENYAN GOVERNMENT IN NAIROBI EARLIER THIS MORNING.
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Q. WHAT EXACTLY DID THE ANNOUNCEMENT SAY?

A. I HAVE THE TEXT HERE, AND I CAN READ IT FOR YOU IF YOU WISH.

Q. WHY WAS THIS ANNOUNCEMENT ONLY PUT OUT IN NAIROBI? WHY DIDN'T YOU ALSO ANNOUNCE IT HERE?

A. IT IS KENYA'S INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATION AND THEIR INVITATION FOR US TO PARTICIPATE. IT IS ONLY LOGICAL THAT THEY WOULD MAKE THE ANNOUNCEMENT.

Q. WHAT IS THE GUAM?

A. THE USS GUAM (LPH-9) IS AN AMPHIBIOUS ASSAULT SHIP. YOU WOULD HAVE TO GET FURTHER DETAILS FROM DEFENSE.

Q. WHAT TYPE OF AIRCRAFT WILL BE USED IN THE FLY-BY, AND HOW MANY AIRCRAFT WILL BE INVOLVED?

A. YOU WOULD HAVE TO ASK DEFENSE FOR THE TECHNICAL DETAILS, BUT FOR YOUR INFORMATION I UNDERSTAND THAT THE AIRCRAFT INVOLVED WILL BE AV-8 HARRIERS, A VERTICAL TAKE-OFF JET AIRCRAFT USED BY THE MARINE CORPS. I AM NOT INFORMED AS TO THE NUMBERS OF AIRCRAFT INVOLVED.

Q. WHAT ARE THE "OTHER US NAVY VESSEL" MENTIONED IN THE KENYAN ANNOUNCEMENT IN ADDITION TO THE USS GUAM?

A. THEY ARE THE USS CLAUDE V. RICKETTS (DDG-5), A GUIDED MISSILE DESTROYER, AND THE USS DUPONT (DD 941), A DESTROYER.

Q. WHERE ARE THESE SHIPS FROM, AND WHAT ARE THEY DOING IN THE INDIAN OCEAN AREA?

A. I WOULD HAVE TO REFER YOU TO THE PENTAGON ON THAT SUBJECT.

Q. BUT ISN'T IT A BIT UNUSUAL THAT THREE US NAVY SHIPS
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AND A COMPLEMENT OF AIRCRAFT JUST HAPPEN TO BE IN MOMBASA DURING THE KENYAN INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATIONS? WASN'T THIS ALL LAID ON IN ORDER TO HAVE THE FLY-BY?

A. WELL, IN THE FIRST PLACE IT IS NOT UNUSUAL FOR US NAVY SHIPS TO BE IN MOMBASA. US NAVAL VISITS TO MOMBASA ARE A ROUTINE OCCURRENCE. IN THIS INSTANCE, THE KENYANS INVITED US TO PARTICIPATE IN THEIR INDEPENDENCE DAY CELEBRATIONS

IF APPROPRIATE UNITS WERE AVAILABLE, AND SINCE THE GUAM WAS AVAILABLE WITH AIRCRAFT WHICH WERE SUITABLE FOR A FLY-BY, WE DECIDED TO ACCEPT THE KENYAN INVITATION.

Q. BUT WHERE WAS THE GUAM "AVAILABLE"? ISN'T IT NORMALLY IN THE MEDITERRANEAN?

A. AGAIN, YOU WOULD HAVE TO ADDRESS THAT TYPE OF QUESTION TO THE PENTAGON. I AM NOT SURE THAT IT IS THEIR USUAL POLICY TO COMMENT ON SHIP LOCATIONS AND SPECIFIC MOVEMENTS. BUT I DO UNDERSTAND THAT THE U.S. EUROPEAN NAVAL COMMAND ANNOUNCED ON NOVEMBER 30 THAT THE GUAM WAS TRAVELING TO THE INDIAN OCEAN FOR ROUTINE OPERATIONS.

Q. LET ME TRY THIS FROM ANOTHER ANGLE, THEN. ISN'T THIS FLY-BY EXERCISE ACTUALLY A DEMONSTRATION OF SUPPORT FOR KENYA, PARTICULARLY GIVEN THE RECENT PROBLEMS BETWEEN KENYA AND UGANDA?

A. WE ARE UNDERTAKING THE FLY-BY IN RESPONSE TO KENYA'S INVITATION, OUT OF RESPECT FOR KENYA AND REFLECTING THE GOOD RELATIONS BETWEEN US. THE FLY-BY IS CEREMONIAL ONLY AND IS IN NO WAY HOSTILE OR DIRECTED AT ANY OTHER COUNTRY.

Q. ARE THE AIRCRAFT ARMED?

A. I HAVE NO WAY OF KNOWING WHAT MIGHT BE THE NORMAL CONFIGURATION OF THESE AIRCRAFT. AS I SAID, THIS IS A CEREMONIAL FLY-BY.

Q. ARE ANY OTHER FOREIGN COUNTRIES PARTICIPATING IN THE KENYAN INDEPENDENCE CELEBRATIONS?

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A. I DON'T KNOW. THAT QUESTION SHOULD BE ASKED OF THE KENYANS. ROBINSON

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